

They want to give President Bush a line item veto. Incredible.

If the President was really interested in curbing Federal expenditures, he could have vetoed any number of appropriations bills over the last 5 years. To this date, Mr. Speaker, the President has not vetoed one bill that has come out of this Republican Congress, not one. President Bush is the longest sitting President since Thomas Jefferson not to exercise the veto.

So one might ask, why does the President need a line item veto when he refuses to use the veto? The fact is, Mr. Speaker, this is nothing more than a smokescreen invented by the Republicans to show that they are serious about deficit reduction.

They are trying to divert attention away from the fact that under their control record surpluses have turned into record deficits. If President Bush really wanted to exercise discipline, he would have vetoed other legislation.

IRAQ

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the impressive work our troops are doing to fight and win the global war on terror.

Last week, we debated a resolution pledging our commitment to victory in Iraq. I was troubled by some of the rhetoric I heard coming from other side of the aisle. Many Democrats are still advocating a withdrawal policy, and that is a policy that is sure to fail.

Mr. Speaker, we are making significant strides toward a secure Iraq and a more stable Middle East. At that critical moment, it would be a tremendous mistake for us to set a hard deadline for troop withdrawal. A deadline only serves to embolden the terrorists because they know they only have to hold out for a few more weeks or months, or 6 months.

Instead, the House last week sent a resounding message to al Qaeda that we will withdraw when the Iraqi security forces are ready and able to defeat the terrorists and their brutal tactics. This, and not some arbitrary deadline, is our true measure of success.

Mr. Speaker, once again, we have assured our troops that we will support them and will allow them to finish this critical mission.

REPUBLICANS STALL BILL THAT WOULD BOOST SALARIES

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, workers across this Nation are increasingly being asked to do more with less. As prices rise at the gas pump, at pharmacies, on college loans, the millions of Americans who work full-time and make minimum wage are slipping further and further into poverty.

The minimum wage in this country has not been raised since 1997 and is now at its lowest level in 50 years, when adjusted for inflation. Making only \$5.15 an hour, a full-time, minimum wage employee will earn only \$10,700 annually. This is far from enough to make ends meet, especially for the 75 percent or so who are responsible for at least half of their family's income. Raising children on a middle-class income is hard enough. Imagine trying to do it on less than a third of that.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats believe that the minimum wage should be a living wage. No American who works full-time, all year, should live in poverty, unable to support their family. Last week at the committee level, Democrats were successful in inserting a minimum wage increase into an appropriations bill. But now, the Republican leadership says they will not permit a vote on the minimum wage. They will not permit a vote in this full House.

It is time for real action to move hardworking Americans out of poverty. Seven million Americans deserve a raise today.

WHERE IS THE OUTRAGE?

(Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, where is the outrage? We hear stories today of two of our soldiers having suffered unspeakable tortures and left in a nearly unrecognizable condition, yet where are the cries of outrage against this brutality?

Instead, we hear today of the EU leadership focused on closing Gitmo and Members of this body rushing to judgment on national TV before the facts are known about what our troops in the field have done.

Yes, we should hold our troops to the highest ethical standards, but we must be outraged by acts against our troops. Our troops deserve our full support, and we must recognize the intensity of evil that we face, the lengths they will go to harm America and undermine our values, and the need to make sure we win this war on terror to keep our families safe at home.

HONORING ALBERT HILL ODOM

(Mr. BOYD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and pay tribute to Mr. Albert Hill Odom, a good friend and a loving husband and father, who passed away on June 6, 2006, at the age of 87.

Mr. Odom was a great man who positively impacted many young lives, including my own. Mr. Odom was a 4-H extension agent for 30 years in Jefferson County, Florida. He taught me and many others so much, not only about the principles of 4-H, but also how to

conduct ourselves in a respectful and professional way. We were all young farm boys whom he carried to places we had never been before.

I am often asked who the most influential people in my life have been, and my answer is always, first, my father, then Albert Odom, my 4-H agent. A lifelong mentor and role model, Albert Odom was a wonderful man who left the world a better place than he found it.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Albert Odom for his many achievements in life and the legacy that he leaves. I extend my deepest sympathy to the Odom family, including his wife, Dot, and his children, Carol and Martha. He will be greatly missed by his family and all who knew him.

STATE CHAMPS—LASSITER AND BLESSED TRINITY

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today I proudly rise to honor and congratulate some spectacular student athletes from Georgia's Sixth District. This month, two of our hometown high schools won a State baseball championship.

Marietta's Lassiter High School and Roswell's Blessed Trinity High both took home their respective class' State championship in dominating fashion. These skilled young men showed what is possible with hard work and unending determination.

Lassiter took home the school's second State title after beating another Sixth District team, Kell High School. The Trojans ended their season with 19 straight wins, sweeping every round of the playoffs.

Blessed Trinity amazed everyone with their ascendancy to the State title in only 6 years of existence. Similar to Lassiter, the Titans went through the playoffs losing only one game and sweeping four out of five series.

These student athletes will forever cherish the memory of this season. The players, their families, and their classmates who cheered them on will always look back at the 2006 season as a source of pride, accomplishment and satisfaction.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to all from Lassiter and Blessed Trinity High Schools.

A PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT THAT PUTS SENIORS FIRST

(Ms. BORDALLO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, House Democrats continue the fight for a real prescription drug benefit that puts America's seniors first. There is no doubt that the current prescription drug program could be improved.

Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs is saving millions of dollars a year simply by negotiating drug prices on behalf of our country's veterans. Just imagine how much more affordable drugs would be if the Federal Government could negotiate for lower prices on behalf of our country's 40 million seniors.

Seniors who need help affording their monthly prescription drug bills deserve to be heard.

House Democrats not only support requiring Medicare to negotiate lower prices with the drug companies, we also favor allowing for the safe reimportation of less expensive drugs from abroad. These are real solutions. Let us finally put our seniors first and help them afford their prescription drugs.

HELPING AMERICAN SENIORS MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the Census Bureau estimates that more than 36 million Americans are over the age of 65, making them members of the fastest growing age group in our country. Under the able leadership of Chairman BUCK MCKEON, House Republicans are working to ensure the quality and effectiveness of Federal programs designed to help America's elderly.

Today, I am proud to speak in support of the Senior Independence Act of 2006, which proposes several necessary reforms to help older individuals avoid institutional care, improve their health services, and have access to employment-based training programs. By reviewing and modernizing programs established over 50 years ago, we are helping to ensure that America's government programs actually address the needs of today's seniors.

This bill will help ensure America's seniors live healthier and happier lives.

In conclusion, our sympathies are with the families of Private Thomas Tucker and Private Kristian Menchaca. God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

WE NEED A LIVABLE WAGE

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, somebody asked me the other day how do you strengthen the economy, and I said to them that you strengthen it by putting additional money into the hands and the pockets of those at the economic bottom. If they get an additional dollar or two, what are they going to do with it? They are going to buy milk, Cream of Wheat, oatmeal, pay the utility bill, maybe some gasoline for an automobile, if they still

have one. They will put it right back into the economy.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, we need a livable wage. Money to the economy is like blood to the body. If too much of it is on one side, you will have a stroke. Our economy has a stroke because too much of the money is in the hands of too few people. We need a livable wage.

WE MADE THE RIGHT DECISION

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, for decades, America and free countries in Europe, Africa and Southeast Asia have been the targets of terrorism, terrorism that originated in the Middle East and has been if not openly supported by countries there then at the very least overlooked by these nations.

On September 11, we decided that periodic attacks like the bombing of the Pan Am Flight 103, the USS *Cole*, Khobar Towers, the first World Trade Center bombing, we decided that that had to stop. We decided the only way to end these attacks was going into the Middle East and let it be known that we would no longer tolerate regimes that encouraged terrorism and shunned the rules most in the civilized world choose to abide by.

That was the right decision then. It remains the right decision today.

DEMOCRATS WORKING TO EXPAND OPPORTUNITY TO MINIMUM WAGE WORKERS

(Mrs. JONES of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, House Democrats want to give minimum-wage workers their first pay raise in 9 years. Can you imagine working 9 years and never have a pay raise? Gas went up, milk went up, housing went up, electricity went up, and the House Republicans are doing everything they can to avoid the issue.

Last week, seven Republicans on the House Appropriations Committee voted with Democrats to increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 as part of the Labor-HHS appropriations bill, but now the leaders of the Republican Party refuse to bring this bill to the floor, hoping they can skirt the issue until after election.

Can you imagine if you had to wait till after an election to get some more money to buy that gas that is \$3 a gallon?

The Republican leaders must have done a lot of arm twisting over the weekend because when Democrats called for an increase in the minimum wage on another appropriations bill yesterday, not one of those seven who were with us last week, who had the guts to be with us last week, were with us yesterday.

I just cannot understand why the House Republicans refuse to allow a floor vote on minimum wage. They will not do it because they know the American people will not vote for them if they do not increase the rate.

SENIOR INDEPENDENCE ACT

(Mr. EHLERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, today I want to commend Chairman MCKEON of the Energy and Workforce Committee and Congressman TIBERI, who chairs the relevant subcommittee of that committee.

Today, we are going to discuss on suspension a bill that they have created, the Senior Independence Act, which is the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. They have done excellent work, and I also want to thank Congressman DANNY DAVIS, who has worked with me and I have worked with him to make certain that we also address mental health issues in this bill.

Last winter, I had the pleasure of meeting Suzann Ogland-Hand, who is one of my constituents, and whom I nominated for the White House Conference on Aging. She is a mental health expert, and she helps large numbers of elderly people deal with their mental health problems.

Clearly, this is an issue whose time has come, and I am very pleased that the bill we will be taking up today under suspension includes provisions that will take care of the mental health needs of so many Americans, large and small, and deal with all the different issues that the elderly face.

I commend, again, Mr. MCKEON for bringing this bill to the floor.

□ 1030

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A WEEK MAKES

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, one of my favorite scriptures is, "Let the work I have done speak for me." Mr. Speaker, what a difference a week makes. Last week seven House Republicans joined Democrats in supporting an increase in the minimum wage. Yesterday, when the measure came up in another appropriation bill, they certainly changed their minds and joined the rest of the Republicans in ignoring the needs of 7 million hard-working minimum-wage workers, which begs the question: What exactly happened over the last 7 days to make those seven Republicans change their minds?

They certainly didn't spend any time with minimum-wage workers, otherwise they would have heard how the